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# HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Help On Wash-Day" - Information from the Office of Experiment Stations,  
U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Take it from Illinois farm women...it's the companionship as much as the work that makes help welcome on wash day. Help--of course--reduces the homemaker's work. But the companionship contributes more to the homemaker's attitude toward the job than does the actual reduction of work.

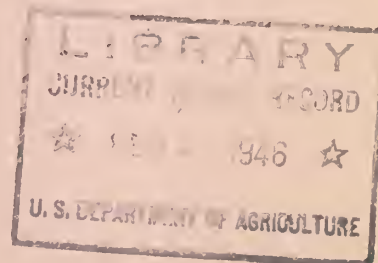
Some economists of the Illinois Experiment Station have made a survey of some fatigue problems of rural homemakers. They talked with more than 400 farm women and visited many of the homes to observe wash day practices.

And one of the questions they asked was "do you like to wash clothes?"

A surprisingly large number--more than four fifths of the homemakers---said they did like---or at least did not mind the washing. And the study showed that the woman who has some help with the laundry is more likely to say she likes the work than the woman who has to do it all by herself.

The study shows that in a good many cases...it's the husband who helps. On farm homes...he usually pumps and carries the water before he goes on to the field to do his own work. Some farmers definitely plan their work so they can be near the house and available for the heavy lifting on wash day. This is often possible in the dull season---the winter months---when washing calls for exposure to the cold weather. Other husbands find it impossible to be on call during the day...but they take on the chore of emptying the washer...rinsing the tubs...and cleaning up the washroom at the end of the day.

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The children help with the washing in many farm homes. Usually they hang up the clothes while Mom concentrates on the washing process proper. In the winter before they go to school...many children help their Mom on wash day in another very welcome way. They make the beds, wash the dishes, put the house in order, get breakfast, and even make some preparations toward dinner.

Interruptions---such as telephone calls, looking after the younger children... watching the cooking---cause many homemakers to be tired on wash day. Elderly persons or semi-invalids in the family can often reduce these interruptions for the homemaker...and lighten her work even when they're unable to help with the heavier part of the laundry.

Some homemakers complained that the men are not careful enough with their clothes. Others said the men in the family make washings harder by neglecting to change work clothes and socks often enough. But the survey showed on the whole that there's good sportmanship on both sides. And interviews in the homes survey invariably revealed a fine companionship and a sharing of experiences.

The fact that other members of the family help the homemaker with the laundry shows they recognize the difficulties of the job. But more important than this...it shows the cooperative spirit of farm families.

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